

PARK BOARD WORKSHOP NOTES

Tuesday, April 12, 2022; 3:00 pm

Depot Boardroom

In Attendance: Commissioner Vicki Dawson, Commissioner Stacey Griggs, Commissioner Joe Deutsch, Commissioner Dawn Morgan, Dave Leker, Dave Bietz, Broc Lietz, Kevin Boe, Carolyn Boutain, Brian Arett and Tara Nielsen

Absent: Commissioner Jerry Rostad

Also in Attendance: Pat O'Toole (BerryDunn) and Art Thatcher (BerryDunn)

- **Welcome and in person introductions**

Dave Leker welcomed everyone to the Strategic Plan workshop and introduced Pat O'Toole and Art Thatcher, BerryDunn consultants. Currently, the Fargo Park District is working on the Strategic Plan. Dave noted earlier in the day that the BerryDunn consultants met with the Directors and Managers to review the working draft of the Mission, Vision and Values and also with stakeholders in the community for a Leadership Summit Workshop II. Next, Dave reviewed the agenda for the workshop.

- **District Organizational Restructure discussion**

Art Thatcher presented and reviewed a District Organizational Restructure.

Art noted the information gathered for the organizational assessment and re-organizational structure was from a SWOT analysis survey monkey to All Staff, looking at board relationships, talking about the Mission, Vision and Values and individual interviews with the Commissioners and individual interviews with the Directors.

Next, Art talked about the current organizational structure and the possible re-organizational structure for the District Organizational Chart. At this time, there are seven direct reports to the Executive Director and one of the items noted out of the staff and board interviews is that the Executive Director spends too much time on day-to-day items and doesn't have the opportunity to look at the big picture and do visionary type work. One of the things that the consultants see to make that change is to break up the direct reports to the Executive Director and have a Deputy Director of Administration and a Deputy Director of Operations to do the day-to-day items and give the Executive Director the opportunity to do the Strategic Planning and interact with the Board.

Next, Pat O'Toole noted that with the re-organizational structure the consultants looked at functions not job titles, people and salaries.

Next, Art continued with the review of the working draft organizational charts for Recreation, Parks, GAPS, Finance, Human Resources, IT and Marketing and asked if there were any questions.

Dave L noted that the consultants have taken their experience from working with other Park and Rec agencies, districts and departments from around the country for the restructure and how do we bring that locally and set up the foundation for the Fargo Park District to move forward for the next 1 – 3 to 25 years.

During the discussion, different functions were discussed and now we are working on re-defining the organizational charts.

Pat noted that the Directors have reviewed the working draft organizational charts a few times. Dave B noted the Managers and staff members that wanted to review the working draft organizational charts have had the opportunity either through a workshop or with their department. Dave B feels this is the third version with the feedback. Pat noted they will be meeting with the Directors and Managers tomorrow and will review the working draft organizational charts and look for feedback.

Commissioner Deutsch asked what the Executive Director and Directors think of the re-organizational structure. Dave B noted that he likes the re-organizational structure with the two Deputy Director positions. Being a Park Director, he could focus as a Park Director under this re-organizational chart and there would be an opportunity to try to get a Deputy Director role. Dave feels we need to get better at getting the information to the Board.

Dave L noted that he needs help and likes the re-organizational structure with the Deputy Director positions. He said that he needs to talk with the Board and Directors and talk about how we get to where we need to go. Commissioner Griggs asked how can we afford not to? The Park District is growing too fast, and the staff is stressed out.

Commissioners Morgan and Dawson asked Dave Bietz if he felt there were too many buckets under the Deputy Director – Operations position and Dave said no. Dave feels we would have Directors to run the areas and they would provide much more value as they would be able to focus 100% with their team. He feels through this process he has learned that the Directors at this time are task driven and they are doing more work of a manager.

Commissioner Griggs asked the consultants, “Because we are an independent taxing agency versus a department under the city or a governmental agency, does the structure stay the same or is it different?” Pat noted the difference is that we have a dedicated funding source and departments within municipalities compete with other services. Pat noted this potential structure helps delegate duties. Pat feels once the functions are figured out and what full-time employees go there then you can implement the structure. Pat noted that the consultants are helping to get the structure functional.

In conclusion, Pat said after the staff organizational workshop on April 13, 2022, the consultants will update the re-organizational structure with any updates and will plan to look at the re-organizational structure at the next meeting with BerryDunn.

Commissioner Griggs likes the draft of the re-organizational structure, and she would support the staff on what they see is the best for the organization.

Commissioner Morgan asked if there is a timeline for the implementation of the re-organizational structure and Art noted yes, the consultants will have a timeline for the implementation.

Board and Director Themes

- Art Thatcher presented.

At this time, Art reviewed a key issues matrix that summarizes and captures the key issues that surfaced during the Strategic Master Plan Phase I process. He noted that it was broken down into themes.

The key issues were placed into four categories on the matrix:

- a) Priority
- b) Opportunity to Improve
- c) Minor or Future Issue
- Left blank means the issue did not come up or was not addressed in that venue

He noted the first piece was board governance and reviewed some of the issues.

Next, Art discussed the issues with the Board and Directors. There was a discussion on the evaluation of the Executive Director and Pat noted that Phase II of the Strategic Plan will develop roles and objectives. Also, having an annual meeting with the Board and Directors is a recommendation to review goals and accomplishments.

Art noted that they heard from individual board members during the interviews that they don't get enough information and don't feel that they are fully informed. Commissioner Griggs feels they receive a lot of information, but we don't have a formal workbook to keep track of information. Commissioner Griggs feels there is a fault in the system as we have too many people doing too many things in order to come back and give a report. Commissioner Griggs noted with a formal workbook in January it could have the goals for the year and expected times and then you could go back and look at information.

Commissioner Dawson noted that it's the bigger projects that may take a long time for a conclusion to get it figured out as there are multiple groups that are involved. Commissioner Dawson did note that on the weekly recap there are categories for projects, and it is starting point.

Commissioner Morgan talked about how there is too much information, and it becomes overwhelming and also not consistent information. Commissioner Morgan would like to be kept up-to-date on important items that we are working on. Commissioner Morgan feels that items seem to happen under the radar, or the Commissioners have talked about items and voted on them and then the items are back again. Commissioner Morgan gave an example by all of the discussions on inclusions in the Island Park Pool. Many of the items that have been voted down by the Board are back in.

Commissioner Dawson noted it is important to educate the Board on why the item is important to the Directors. An example is the Hiring Policy. She felt that she didn't have enough understanding of why the Directors wanted to update the policy and she feels if she had more conversation and education on the updates to the policy the process could have gone better.

Art noted a communication piece can help. As a Board, if you are given the information in a timely fashion and its quality information, it would help in respecting each other's positions and giving the proper information.

Next, there was a discussion on communication and how the Board members should go through the Executive Director. Dave L feels we need to find the balance and work through the issues. Dave noted if it's an action item, something that is requested to be done it should go through him, but if it's a consultation or basic information, the Board can go to the source.

Next, Pat talked about the job descriptions for the Board and feels they need to be updated.

Commissioner Deutsch feels we need to define the role of the Board President and follow through with it.

Art feels that the Board and Directors agree that it is something that we need to work on, and it can be a positive for the District. Commissioner Griggs noted that we need to decide what is the format of the Board.

In conclusion, the key issues matrix summarizes the areas that need immediate attention and determines the direction of the implementation of recommendations to improve communication and Board and Director relationships as a Phase I Strategic Master Plan task.

Updated Mission, Vision and Values discussion

Art Thatcher presented.

Art reviewed the working draft of the Mission, Vision and Values with the Board and asked for feedback.

Draft Updated Mission

We provide year-round, quality parks, facilities, and affordable recreational activities, to create a strong, healthy community where all are welcome.

Draft Updated District Vision

We enrich lives in our community by providing a wide range of parks, facilities and recreational activities.

Draft Updated District Values

Intentional Leadership – We inspire the people around us to reach their full potential.

Service – We are committed to serving the community with passion and sincerity.

Stewardship – We work to protect and preserve all our resources.

Inclusion – We strive to make our parks, facilities and recreational activities welcoming to all.

Solution Focused – We find ways to solve problems.

Collaboration – We partner with stakeholders to provide a variety of parks, facilities, and recreational activities.

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.

Notes Submitted by Tara Nielsen, Executive Assistant